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My paintings are derived from my fiancée in a manner that shows the importance of her to me. The focus of the paintings is lighting, facial characteristics, and the use of mark making.

VISUAL DOCUMENTS

by

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Approved by

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## APPROVAL PAGE

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## VISUAL DOCUMENTS

Art is an avenue to be both creative and expressive, and it provides me with a wide variety of opportunities to present my perception of the way I see things. I view my work as a tool to create a visual document to freeze time, meaning that when I am caught in the moment of painting, I use my hands and my paint as a record of my life. For this reason, no matter how much the world around me moves or changes, the information that I am recording at any particular moment remains permanent.

As a young painter, I feel that there is so much psychological pressure to live up to those who have mastered oil painting. The pressure comes from within myself because as an artist, I realize how much bad artwork exists in the world today, and I do not want my work to fall into that category. Therefore, I am constantly striving to work through my technical problems to improve my work, as artists before my time have also done. Although I feel the pressure of history, there are many positive reasons why I continue to paint. One of these reasons is that oil paint is very malleable and fulfills my desire to draw with it as if it was charcoal. With oil paint I can achieve more bold and expressive brush strokes with different textural variations. It also allows me to work wet into wet or wet into dry. Furthermore, when a mistake occurs, it can be wiped or scraped back down to the visibility of the raw canvas and corrected if necessary through a subtractive drawing technique. Therefore, when it's just my material, my model, and me, I begin to ponder about artists in the past who have made history through paintings. That

is when I most feel the concern to bring something original and new to each composition.

My fiancée is a key subject in my paintings. Cropping out things that surround her that are not essential to the point I need to make is how I strive to present her importance and the love I have for her. Most of my inspiration comes from experiencing many different life situations involving my interracial relationship, and I convert my love for my fiancée in this three-dimensional world and transfer it onto a two-dimensional surface.

Other forms of inspiration for my work generate from artists like Walter Sickert, Pierre Bonnard, and Edouard Vuillard. Finding inspiration from this combination of diverse artists has driven me to expand my visual vocabulary, from viewing good and bad art in order to formulate my own voice. This method of viewing the good with the bad art has made decision-making in my work more engaging, because it gives me the chance to visually explain my opinion on what is helpful and what is not for my own work.

My use of cropping out things that are not essential to the point I need to make in the work is inspired by Sickert's oil on canvas painting titled "The End of the Act". This painting is of a lady by the name of Miss Helen Couper-Black, who has collapsed on a sofa after a long stage act in London. I have explored Sickert's method of composition in "The End of the Act". The cropping of the sofa, the simple interior space, and the energy of each mark gives the painting an atmospheric presence. These are all visual components I strive to inject into my own work.

Bonnard and Vuillard's works contain more of a stylized approach. Both artists' works have influenced my own work, where on almost every physical attempt to apply

my brush to the canvas, I too find myself constantly becoming aware of paint serving as form and mark to create spatial relationships in the work. This combination of representational artists is very important to my work, but it is also important that I contribute some of my social background in my work.

I view my painting practice as an outline in which I analyze the discipline I received as a child, which today I apply directly to my work ethic as a young artist. For instance, my parents firmly believed in the statement that “good things come to those who are patient”, and today this statement guides me as an artist. Today, in order to satisfy my artistic needs as a painter in relation to this redundant statement from my parents, each painting requires an average of fifteen to seventeen hours per painting. This restricted time frame for each painting allows the paintings to unfold themselves without having to force any elements that would end in a nonsatisfying result. This patience also refers to my palette, which plays a huge role in my painting practice. For me, my palette is the place where all major color decisions are made. One such decision is that I do not pre-mix certain colors until I feel they are needed. Therefore, I lay down the most basic colors first, and mix the more complicated colors as my paintings progress.

Each painting is approached in a simple manner, although the subject varies from painting to painting. Some of these approaches consist of my fiancée in a more relaxed state, which I have made visible in painting “PSK Seated II”. My decision for the arrangement for “PSK Seated II” is based upon her exhaustion from a long day at work, which her seated position on the living room floor and body language fully describes. Her position on the living room floor consists of her being placed in front of a window in

which she is being softly lit from the warm rays of the afternoon sunlight. Although painting II differs in physical size and compositional decisions, the biggest difference is that some of my first decisions made are visible from the beginning to the end of the painting, such as the light residual washes. Keeping this in mind while working through painting II, I was able to show the relationships of one mark to another. Also, applying these residual washes, along with scraping the paint back down to the visibility of the raw canvas in painting II, is my way of saying that I have control of my medium. I feel that each painting is derived from a dark, warm earth tone palette, and besides the physical marks made, this type of palette reinforces my visual voice.

An interesting question does arise when referring to painting II, “What good is a painting if it does not speak to you?” For me, having something to say through my fiancée about myself, as well as social and political issues, is essential to each decision made in each painting. This happens to be one of the most challenging situations about my work; how do I make the paintings about my love for her without including myself in the paintings? This question started out as one to ponder about, but as the paintings deepened, my passion to make these loaded paintings grew and my answer surfaced. The answer: “What other way to show the importance of my fiancée than to display her inner person through her facial characteristics?” I chose to do this instead of making her life-size or placing a halo above her head like artists did centuries ago. “PSK Standing III” is also loaded with these characteristics, which is constructed from this dark warm palette because it too is painted from direct sunlight, much like painting II. The earth tones are further incorporated in painting III through the shadows and skin tones that are prevalent



in painting II. My reason for choosing a standing pose for painting III is that it gives the viewers a vertical means to move throughout the composition, rather than a horizontal view only.

Although paintings “Four Kids Being Entertained”, “Waiting For The Outcome”, and “Artist Working” do not include my fiancée visually, they too are constructed from a dark warm palette and all of the figures are seated in each of these compositions. The figures are seated in these three paintings due to the fact that they reference my fiancée being exhausted from a long day of work, as seen in “PSK Seated II”. For me to reference these three paintings to my fiancée without having her present is how each painting functions as a cohesive unit. One painting in particular that presents these characteristics in a successful way is “Four Kids Being Entertained”, which describes the things my fiancée prefers to do after a long day of work, such as relaxing while being entertained by her favorite TV shows. The painting “Four Kids Being Entertained” depicts this in the title as well as in the painting.

As stated earlier, my philosophy of art has allowed me to express my feelings for my fiancée and then create a way for others to view these feelings through this body of thesis work. I have also ensured that these moments of my fiancée’s life will be “frozen” in time and each of my decisions made about the relationships of mark have been recorded in my history of painting.

## CATALOGUE

Rattley III, Juie. *Artist Working*. Oil Painting. 2007

Rattley III, Juie. *Four Kids Being Entertained*. Oil Painting. 2007

Rattley III, Juie. *PSK Seated II*. Oil Painting. 2007

Rattley III, Juie. *PSK Standing III*. Oil Painting. 2007

Rattley III, Juie. *Waiting For The Outcome*. Oil Painting. 2007